**WORSHIP**

**Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost**

OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

*Salvation for Others*

**This is what the LORD says: “Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed.**

**56:1** MAINTAIN JUSTICE – Sinners can only “maintain justice” after they have experienced God’s form of justice, i.e. justification by grace. Justice is established for God’s people by the ministry of the Suffering Servant in Is 42:1,3,4. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

*salvation … righteousness.* See 45:8; 46:13; 51:5 and notes.

This righteousness is defined by what God loves (v. 4), what shows love for his name (v. 6) and negatively by avoiding what God hates (v. 2 ). Righteousness is brought by the wonderful Son (Is 9:6) and it is the means by which Zion is redeemed (Is 1:27). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

BE REVEALED – Often used in a technical sense of “revelation.” No matter how diligently sinners pursue righteousness, it is unobtainable unless the Lord brings it near.

(Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

**6﻿ And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant— ﻿7﻿ these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” ﻿8﻿ The Sovereign LORD declares— he who gathers the exiles of Israel: “I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered.”**

**56:6** AND FOREIGNERS – Isaiah progressively reveals that foreigners will become part of God’s covenant people and confess the true God. The Suffering Servant will be the one in whom the coastlands trust (v. 42:4); he will be the Light to the Nations (Is. 42:6; 49:6), so Yahweh’s salvation will extend to the ends of the earth (Is. 49:6). Nations will join Israel’s sons and daughters (Is 60:3-4) in an Epiphany procession to the Light. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

*serve.* Cf. 60:7, 10.

**56:7** *my holy mountain.* See 2:2–4 and note.

It is the Lord who brings the saved to his holy mountain, gives them joy in his house of prayer, and regards favorably their sacrifices on his altar. This is a gracious call to all people. Although Israel at times ignored this aspect of the covenant, it was present throughout. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

*offerings … accepted on my altar.* Cf. 60:7; contrast 1:11–13.

WILL BE ACCEPTED – The Hebrew for “accepted,” is literally, “for favor, good will.” By God’s grace sinners are brought into a favorable relationship with God. Anticipating Christ’s sacrifice, the OT sin offerings rendered the Israelites acceptable to God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

*house of prayer for all nations.*† Solomon may have anticipated this in his prayer of dedication for the temple (1Ki 8:41–43). See the words of Jesus in Mk 11:17.

**56:8** *gathers the exiles.* See 11:11–12 and notes.

The Lord gathers both the exiles of Israel and others not of this fold (john 10:16). We are lost in our sins, unable to find God. The Good News is that the Good Shepherd comes looking for us and gathers us, as Luther declares in his explanation of the Third Article in the Small Catechism. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3) T

*gather still others.* Including Gentiles (see v. 3 and note; cf. Jn 10:16).

EPISTLE

Romans 11:1-2a, 13-15, 26-32

**I** **ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. ﻿2﻿ God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew.**

**11:1** *reject.* Totally reject. There has always been a faithful remnant among the Jewish people. (CSB)

Greek grammar requires a negative answer. The idea that God should push aside or repudiate His people is unthinkable (Ps. 94:14; 1 Sam 12:22). (TLSB)

TRIBE OF BENJAMIN – He was the beloved son of Jacob and Rachel; Jacob’s only son born in the Promised Land (Gn 35:16-18). The tribe of Benjamin gave Israel her first king (Paul’s namesake, Saul; 1 Sam 9:1-16) and was regarded highly by the Jews. Within the borders stood Jerusalem and the temple (jgs 1:21). To belong to this tribe was a privilege that Paul stresses (Php 3:5). (TLSB)

**11:2** *whom he foreknew.* See note on 8:29. (CSB)

God chose Israel to be His people through whom He would carry out His saving purpose. (TLSB)

**13﻿ I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry ﻿14﻿ in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. ﻿15﻿ For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?**

**11:13** YOU GENTILES – They were probably the majority in the congregation. (TLSB)

*apostle to the Gentiles.* See 1:5; Ac 9:15; Gal 1:16; 2:7, 9. (CSB)

This was Paul’s call. (TLSB)

MY MINISTRY – This is Paul’s apostolic office as Christ’s servant for the Gospel sake (cf 1 Co 3:5; Eph 3:7) (TLSB)

**11:14** SAVE SOME OF THEM – Paul does not envision a mass converstion of the nation of Israel. This is important for the interpretation of “all Israel” in verse 26. (TLSB)

**11:15** *their rejection.* God’s temporary and partial exclusion of the Jews. (CSB)

Paradoxically, through the Israelites’ rejection of the Messiah, God brought reconciliation (cf 5:10-11; 2 Cor 5:18-20). However, God’s rejection of unbelieving Israelites was temporary, for some would be accepted through faith and receive a new life to be consumed in the resurrection from the dead (cf Ezk 37:1-14). (TLSB)

*reconciliation of the world.* Somewhat equivalent to “riches for the world” (see note on v. 12). (CSB)

*life from the dead.*† Equivalent to “greater riches” in v. 12. The sequence of redemptive events is: The “transgression” and “loss” (v. 12) of Israel leads to the salvation of the Gentiles, which leads to the jealousy or envy of Israel, which leads to the “fullness” or “full number” (v. 12) of Israel, which leads to even more riches for the Gentiles. But what are the “greater riches” (v. 12) for the Gentiles, which Paul describes here as “life from the dead”? Three views have been suggested: (1) an unprecedented spiritual awakening in the world; (2) the consummation of redemption at the resurrection of the dead; (3) a figurative expression describing the conversion of the Jews as a joyful and glorious event (like resurrection)—which will result in even greater blessing for the world. Of these three views the first seems less likely, since, before Israel’s assumed general spiritual rebirth, the fullness of the Gentiles will already have come in (see v. 25). Since the Gentile mission will then be complete, there seems to be no place for a period of unprecedented spiritual awakening. The third view is also unlikely, since v. 14 speaks specifically of merely “some of them” (Jews) being saved (see note on v. 26). (CSB)

**28﻿ As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, ﻿29﻿ for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable. ﻿30﻿ Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, ﻿31﻿ so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you. ﻿32﻿ For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.**

**11:28** *they are enemies.*† As long as they reject the gospel. (CSB)

*on your account.* Explained in v. 11. (CSB)

The Jews are objects of God’s hostility as far as the Gospel is concerned because they oppose it. But in God’s plan this was for the Gentiles’ benefit. (TLSB)

*loved on account of the patriarchs.*† Not because any merit was passed on from the patriarchs to the Jewish people as a whole, but because God in love chose Israel. (CSB)

With respect to His choice of Israel and for the sake of the patriarchs, God loves the Jewish people. They are objects of God’s love and of His wrath at the same time. (TLSB)

**11:29** *God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable.*† God does not change his mind with reference to his call. Even though Israel is presently in a state of unbelief, God’s purpose will be fulfilled in all who believe. (CSB)

God still has His gifts (9:4–5) and His gracious invitation for His people to receive the salvation offered through His Son. God remains faithful to His promises. (TLSB)

**11:30-31** The experience of the Jews and of the Gentiles are parallel. Both have received mercy in the face of disobedience. Because of Israel’s disobedience (1:18-32), undeserving Gentiles received mercy. Because of the mercy to the Gentiles, disobedient Jews will receive mercy (cf v. 11) (TLSB)

**11:32** *all men.*† Both groups under discussion (Jews and Gentiles). There has been a period of disobedience for each in order that God may have mercy on both groups. Paul is in no way teaching universal salvation. (CSB)

Paul summarizes not only vv 30–31 but also the overriding purpose of God’s mercy in chs 9–11. All people—Jews and Gentiles—are imprisoned in their disobedience, with no possibility of escape unless God in His mercy releases them. “We should not reach conclusions about our election to eternal life based on reason or God’s Law.… ‹The true judgment about predestination› must be learned alone from the Holy Gospel about Christ” (FC Ep XI 9–10). (TLSB)

GOSPEL

Matthew 15:21-28

*The Faith of the Canaanite Woman*

﻿**21﻿ Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ﻿22﻿ A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession.” ﻿23﻿ Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.” ﻿24﻿ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.” ﻿25﻿ The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said. ﻿26﻿ He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.” ﻿27﻿ “Yes, Lord,” she said, “but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” ﻿28﻿ Then Jesus answered, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.**

**15:21-28** Matthew paints a stark contrast between the religious leaders and the Canaanite woman. At the beginning of ch 15, the Pharisees and Sadducees reject Jesus, and he condemns their hypocrisy of using tradition to overturn God’s Word. At the beginning of ch 16, the leaders again react negatively to Jesus’ teaching, and he condemns the leaven of their heresy. Sandwiched between these two hostile exchanges with leaders of Israel are times of mercy and miracles for those in great need. Jesus restores the demon-possessed daughter to her mother, heals many who are brought to him as he teaches, and feeds the four thousand. Faith (of a Gentile! woman!) and praise from those healed stand out all the more because they are found within the context of rejection and denigration. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 3)

Tyre, Sidon, and a Canaanite woman all signal that Jesus is in pagan lands, and these places have the connotation of everything dangerous to those of Israel. Jesus is definitely in foreign territory. In v 22, the woman’s call to Jesus as Lord and from the royal line of David borders on worship. When she names the enemy as demonic possession, she pits Jesus against Satan in a preview of the cross and resurrection. The dogs (*kunaria*, literally “little dogs,” a diminutive of *kuōn*) appear to be house dogs, not the strays that roamed the streets, especially since they are near enough to the table to feed on any leftover scraps. Still, dogs were considered lowly and even contemptible, and thus the boundary between Jew and Gentile is maintained. On the other hand, that Jesus names her as a dog is progress as the woman now sees herself in the house with Jesus! (See Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew, A Commentary: The Churchbook, Matthew 13–28*, revised and expanded edition [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990, 2004], 97–103.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 3)

**15:21-22** Tyre was a Gentile city in Phoenicia (modern-day Lebanon), 30 miles northwest of Capernaum. A Canaanite woman approaches Jesus with a desperate need. The Canaanites were ancient, pre-Israel inhabitants of Palestine. In the parallel passage (Mk 7:24–30) Mark tells us she was a Greek (Gentile), born in Syrian Phoenicia. She addresses Jesus as “Lord, Son of David,” which implies she is a “God-fearer” who recognizes Jesus as the promised Messiah. She is “crying out” to Jesus (*ekrazen* is imperfect, indicating she kept on crying out), begging him to have mercy on her. Her urgent plea is for Jesus to help her daughter, who is “suffering terribly from demon-possession.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 3)

**15:21** WITHDREW TO THE REGION OF TYRE AND SIDON – One of the few times that Jesus ventured beyond the borders of Galilee. (TLSB)

This Gentile territory, a coastal region northwest of Galilee that had never been part of Israel and had been dominated by Phoenicians in OT times. (CC)

**15:22** ESV has “and behold.” At the start.” With “llo” Matthew draws attention to the approach and the words of the Canaanite woman. (CC)

A CANAANITE WOMAN – Descendant of the OT race that Israel was ordered to exterminate because of their idol worship (Dt 20:17). (TLSB)

kai idou denotes something noteworthy, in this case that a Gentile woman would approach Jesus with such confidence. By language this woman was Greek, by birth a Canaanite, a heathen, by allegiance a Roman subject, a Syrophencian, of Syria, as distinguished from a Phoenician of Carthage; and by faith of that harvest which was to spring up in Phoenicia, in Greece, in Carthage, and in Rome. It was through the reports that she heard of the great deeds of Christ, which had been broadcast across the borders of Israel into the surrounding lands of the heathen, that she had come to faith.

*Have mercy*. Typical cry for help in a desperate situation (17:15; 20:30). (TLSB)

*Son of David*. This Gentile woman addressed Jesus in the same way as did two Jewish blind men (9:27). In contrast to the Pharisees who were spiritually blind, she was not (v 14). (TLSB)

*oppressed by a demon*. Cf 4:24; 12:22. The daughter’s ailment is not further specified. (TLSB)

**15:23** JESUS DID NOT ANSWER – 15:23-24 Jesus is silent at first in response to the woman’s cries. He is not only testing her faith, but also testing the disciples’ understanding of his universal mission. The woman annoys the disciples by following them and disturbing the peace. They ask Jesus to “dismiss her,” *apoluson autēn*, which may imply, “Do what she asks, so she will go away.” Jesus’ reply to the disciples, which seems on the surface to be rather cold and unfeeling, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel,” is likely meant for the woman to overhear and further test her faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 3)

SEND HER AWAY – When Jesus remained silent, making no response to the woman’s cry for mercy, the disciples begged Him to help her and so get rid of her. (TLSB)

**15:24** SENT ONLY TO THE LOST SHEEP OF ISRAEL – Jesus’ sending to Israel did not exclude that he showed grace to the heathen and received those who came to him in faith. As soon as the divine plan had been worked out, it would be carried to all the world. The rule is laid down in Romans 2:9, 10. The Samaritan woman (John 4:7ff), the centurion of Capernaum (Matthew 8:1-13) and the Syrophenician woman are the exception, not the rule.

Jesus reminded His disciples that His mission was limited to the people of Israel. (TLSB)

**15:25** *knelt.* Same Gk word translated “worship” in 14:33. (TLSB)

LORD HELP ME – This woman would simply not be turned away. (TLSB)

Apparently overhearing Jesus’ words, the woman is moved to action. She humbles herself completely, worshipfully kneeling before Jesus and pleading, “Lord, help me.” This is more than a frantic request from a desperate mother. It is a prayer of faith. Following her example we should come to Jesus with our requests as beggars before the Master with a humble, worshipful, and trusting heart. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 3)

**15:26-27** Jesus answers her plea with what again seems like a cold, uncaring response. He says it is not right to take the food meant for the children and throw it to their “dogs,” *kunariois*. *kunarion* literally means “little dog” and probably refers to a pet dog in the home. The testing of this woman’s faith reaches a level where someone of lesser faith might have given up in disgust. However, it is likely that Jesus speaks these words not with a cold, unkind tone of voice, but in a warm, caring manner. The woman seems to understand Jesus’ point that the promised blessings of God’s kingdom must first be shared with the Jews. But she is more than willing to settle for a few crumbs from the master’s table. She believes it would take just a few crumbs of his power and kindness to make her daughter whole again. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 3)

**15:26** *children’s.* “The lost sheep of Israel” (v. 24). (CSB)

Jesus answered the mother with a pithy statement expressing a general truth or rule of conduct. Because of the proverbial nature of His statement, He may not be calling her a dog. (TLSB)

Now Jesus wants to know this: does the Canaanite woman really know who He is, or are the things that have come out of her mouth been just words and no more? (CC)

*their dogs.* The Greek says “little dogs,” meaning a pet dog in the home, and Jesus’ point was that the gospel was to be given first to Jews. The woman understood Jesus’ implication and was willing to settle for “crumbs.” Jesus rewarded her faith (v. 28). (CSB)

**15:27** YES LORD – For the third time she addresses him as Lord. Nai denotes complete assent.

EVEN THE DOGS – Luther states: “She catches the Lord with his own words. Yes, still more, with the rights of a dog she gains the rights of a child. Now where will he go? He has caught himself and must help her. But know this well, he loves to be caught in this way. If we only had the skill of this woman to catch God in his own judgment and say, ‘Yes, Lord, it is true, I am a sinner and not worthy of thy grace, but you have promised forgiveness and didst not come to call the righteous, but like Paul says in 1 Timothy 1:15, to save sinners.’ Behold, the Lord must then through his own judgment, have mercy on us.”

How did she know? Who had taught this Canaanite woman about Israel’s Messiah? We simply do not know. Matthew’s hearers/readers do know, however the ultimate answer to the question of how this woman came to know and believe. The Father revealed it to her. She is, like the Magi and the centurion before her, an unlikely candidate for such faith. (CC)

This astute woman matched Jesus’ maxim with one of her own: Pets get the scraps that fall from the table. (TLSB)

**15:28** YOU HAVE A GREAT FAITH – Second time Jesus commended the faith of a Gentile (cf 8:10). In contrast, Jesus repeatedly chided His disciples for their lack of faith (8:26; 14:31; 17:20). (TLSB)

Jesus commends the woman’s “great faith.” We are reminded of the faith of another Gentile, the centurion from Capernaum who asked Jesus to heal his servant. Jesus said of him, “I have not found such great faith even in Israel” (Lk 7:9). Then Jesus tells the woman that her prayer of faith has been answered, and we learn that “her daughter was healed from that very hour.” This is not only a great miracle, but also a great message for the 12 disciples and for Jesus’ disciples in every age. God’s salvation is for all people. Just as the Gospel spread in the first century from Jerusalem and Judea to “Samaria and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8), so in our day the Gospel is moving out from Europe and North America, where many are ignoring or rejecting it, and spreading rapidly through Africa and Asia and to the ends of the earth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 3)

In what does greatness of faith consist? Two things. She knew Jesus is “Lord” and “Son of David.” And she knew that Israel’s Messiah had come to give such an abundance that there would be something left over even for her. (CC)

**15:21–28** This persistent Canaanite woman gains Jesus’ praise for believing that He will help her sick daughter. In time of need, we often either fail to pray with such determination or only ask hesitantly. Instead, we ought to “pray without ceasing” (1Th 5:17). Jesus hears all prayers offered in His name, and He will answer in His own time and way as is best for us. Therefore, we can pray with confidence. • Lord, sometimes I have not because I ask not. Move me to pray with confidence. Amen. (TLSB)